

Media Release

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Better planning and investment needed to improve 'walkability' in Perth

RAC's first ever walking survey has highlighted the need for better planning and greater investment in creating pedestrian-friendly environments to encourage more people to walk.

General Manager Corporate Affairs Will Golsby said the survey of almost 600 Western Australians revealed that whilst a majority travel to work or study by car there is potential for more trips to be made on foot.

"Just under half of respondents walk for 30 minutes or more per day on an average weekday in their local area, increasing to 58% on weekends. These trips are typically to local shops, to run errands or to participate in recreational or leisure activities," Mr Golsby said.

"Outside of their local area, people tend to walk a lot less but when they do it's typically to access work or study and public transport."

Most trips will start and end with walking. However, the amount people walk is influenced by the design of streets and places, and the availability and quality of infrastructure for pedestrians.

"It's positive to see that 63% of respondents find it at least moderately easy to walk in their local area," Mr Golsby said.

"Although there are mixed feelings about the access to infrastructure for pedestrians, respondents are most satisfied with footpaths and controlled crossings and least satisfied with shared paths.

"When asked about feelings of safety in relation to traffic volumes, speeds and other road safety issues, 21% of survey respondents said they feel unsafe walking in their local area and 24% when walking in other areas.

"Increased investment and comprehensive planning is required to make it safer, more practical and more enjoyable for people to walk.

"Just over half of respondents believe the State Government should prioritise the better planning of communities to provide more destinations, amenities and transport services within walking distance in order to help encourage more Western Australian's to walk.

"It is essential that the needs and expectations of pedestrians are not overlooked and that sufficient focus is placed policy, planning and infrastructure provision to create streets, places and communities which make it easy to walk."

Fast facts:

- Half of respondents drive to their place of work or study
- Nine per cent walk the whole way
- 17% walk and catch public transport.
- Of those respondents who have children at school in their local area, only one in four takes them to school on foot and 64% admitted they never do so.

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